GOD the Author of Victory.

A

SERMON

PREACH'D in the

Royal-Chappel

AT

WHITE-HALL,

On *Thursday* the 19th of *August*, 1708.

BEING

The Day of *Thanksgiving* for the Happy Success of Her Majesty's Councils and Forces against the late Insolent Attempt of the Pretender to Invade Her Majesty's Kingdom of *Great Britain*: As also for the Glorious Victory obtain'd over the *French* near *Audenarde* in *Flanders* by the Arms of Her Majesty and Her Allies, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*.

By MICHAEL STANHOPE, M. A.

Publish'd at the Request of some Persons of Quality.

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TO THE

HONOURABLE

CHARLES STANHOPE Esq;

OF

Mansfeild in *Nottinghamshire.*

SIR,

THE Opportunity I now have of owning *publickly* how extremely I'm oblig'd to *you* for the *Education* you've given me, is beyond expression agreeable.

I wish

The Epiſtle Dedicatory.

I wiſh my *Sermon*, the ſmall *Offering* of *Duty*, was anſwerable to *That*; 'twou'd then be more pleaſing to *you*, more acceptable to the *World*, and of greater Service to

SIR,

Your moſt Affectionate

and moſt Obedient Son,

LONDON,
Auguſt 21. 1708.

M. Stanhope.

PSALM XCVIII. 1, 2.

O Sing unto the Lord a new ſong: for he hath done marvellous things.
With his own right Hand, and with his holy Arm; hath he gotten himſelf the Victory.

MANY have unhappily bin of Opinion that the Succeſs of Humane Affairs, *Good* and *Ill*, depends altogether upon the Conduct and Policy of the *Managers* of 'em; ſome entertain a quite contrary to this, and think that *Chance* and *Fortune* have the greateſt ſhare in the event of Sublunary things: But *thoſe* who have made it their buſineſs to ſearch *nicely*, and enquire *ſtrictly* into this Point, have concluded that *God* is the *Governour* of the World, that nothing comes to paſs, no deſign is effected, no means do, or can attain their end, without either the *Governing*, the *Directing*, or the *Permiſſive Providence* of *Almighty God*.—— He wiſely Governs, he powerfully Over-rules, he doth what he pleaſes: He control's by *Omnipotency*, he prevents our firmeſt Intentions by his *Goodneſs*, and daſheth in pieces our moſt Politick Deſigns. *There be many devices in Mens Hearts, yet the counſel of the Lord that*

ſhall ſtand, Prov. 19. 12. *A Mans Heart deviſeth his way: but the Lord directeth his ſteps*, Prov. 16. 9. and *Happy are the People that are in ſuch a caſe: yea, Bleſſed are they who have the Lord for their God*, Pſal. 144. 15. Whatever Men may be forward to infer from the uncertainty of Events againſt the *Providence* or *Unconcernedneſs of God*, or to attribute all to *Second Cauſes*, without having any reſpect to the *Firſt*, 'tis plain from the Examination of the *whole*, that *Reaſon*, and our moſt *Holy Religion* is againſt them. This is the way to deny *God* the Honour of his Mercy, and deprive our ſelves of the continuence, and farther comfort of his Protection. Certainly next to the Aſſent to the *Exiſtence* of a *God*, the aſſurance of his Care and Providence comes neareſt to the *Eſſence* of *Religion*. And this belief ſhould inſtruct and teach us Mortals to aſcribe the Glory of all good things to *God* the *Author* of 'em. *O then let us Sing unto the Lord a new ſong: for he hath done marvellous Things. With his own right Hand, and with his holy Arm; hath he gotten himſelf the Victory.* ——— " O let the new, " and extraordinary Benefits which the *Lord* " hath beſtow'd upon *Us*, provoke us to *Sing* " *Praiſes unto him* with freſh *Devotion*; for " *He* hath done Stupendious things, and by " his *Almighty Goodneſs alone*, and incompara- " ble Strength, hath *wrought Salvation* for " thoſe, who were unworthy to be helped " by *Him*, as they were unable to help them- " ſelves.

This

This Pſalm which my *Text* is part of, having no Title, *Divines* have bin divided in their Opinion about *its Author*.

The *Greeks* believ'd *David* was.

'Tis certain 'twas Pen'd upon occaſion of ſome Great *Deliverance* which *God* had *given* to *Iſrael*, and therefore is worthy of being the Subject of the *Solemnity of this Day*, ſet apart by *Authority* for *publick Thankſgiving to Almighty God* for diſappointing the Ambitious deſigns of *France*, by the late wonderful Succeſs *He* hath given to Her Majeſty's Councils againſt the Inſolent Attempt to invade *Great Britain*; and by giving to her Majeſty's Arms, in Conjunction with thoſe of her Allies, under the Command of the Duke of *Marlborough*, a Glorious Victory near *Audenarde* in *Flanders*.

In the Words we may obſerve that *David* (taking it for granted *He* compos'd this Pſalm) doth exhort *People* to praiſe *God* for the *Marvellous things* he had done for 'em.

Secondly, Another obſervation naturally flows from *my Text* moſt ſuitable to this occaſion, *viz.* That *Almighty God* is the *Author of Victory*, and that *Succeſs in War* argues the undoubted Interpoſal of *Divine Providence*; *With his own right Hand, and with his holy Arm, hath he gotten himſelf the Victory.*

The firſt particular I ſhall be ſilent to, *viz.* The Exhortation to praiſe *God* for the *Marvellous things* that *He* hath done for *Us*;

Our preſence in this Sacred place, ſhews our willingneſs to *That*, and renders an enlargement needleſs.

Secondly Then, I come to prove that *Almighty God* is the *Author of Victory*, and that *Succeſs in War* argues the undoubted interpoſal of *Divine Providence*.

The Obſervation is *ſelf-evident*; for if we confeſs the *Being* of a *God*, that ſufficiently declares his *Providence*. The *Creation* and *Preſervation* of the *World*, gives *God* a right of *Dominion* over the works of his Hands.

The vaſt variety of *Accidents* that Mankind is attended with, proves beyond any Contradiction, the certainty of the *Race being not always to the Swift*, that is, Men of the longeſt reach, and moſt unwearied diligence don't always ſucceed; nor *the Battel to the Strong*, that is, neither doth Power always prevail, *Eccleſ.* 9. 11. If then theſe probable means miſcarry, we muſt have recourſe to ſomething *higher*, the *Everlaſting*, the *All-powerful Lord of Hoſt*. What *Folly*, what *Madneſs* is it to depend upon our own *Force*, when *Experience* inſtructs us the Iſſue of Humane Affairs ſo ſeldom anſwer it? *'Tis not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth Mercy*, Rom. 9. 16. 'Tis daring to aſſume the Honour to our ſelves, for, *we got not the Land in poſſeſſion through our own Sword; neither was it our own Arm that helped us: But 'twas thy right Hand, O God, and thine Arm, and the light of thy Countenance*, Pſal. 44. 3, 4.

War

War by the *Heathens* was thought to be an *Appeal* to the *Gods*, and when any *ſignal Succeſs* was given, *Nature* furniſh'd 'em with this Opinion, that *Heaven* had determin'd on their ſide, and for that *Divine Grace*, and *Favour*, *gladly* they made their *Oblation* unto 'em. The Nations of old frequently made *Appeals* to *Heaven*, the *Juſtice* of their Cauſe was ſent up thither, and a bleſſing anſwerable to *That* was look'd for from *Thence*. The *Romans*, as long as *Honeſty* and *Juſtice* were made uſe of in their *Civil and Martial Adminiſtrations*, highly applauded this Practice.

The *Heathens* concluſions, (tho' Ignorance prevented their having clear Ideas of the *True God*) were *Wiſe* and *Juſt*, ſhould teach us *Chriſtians* Gratitude, to aſcribe all the Glory of our Victories to the one God; to look upward an own that we are undeſerving of his Mercies, if we are unmindful of the *Hand* that beſtows 'em, and impute that to be *Fortuitous*, the Chance of War, which is ſolely the Bounty of a moſt Gracious Providence. No: Let us not talk *of the Lots being caſt into the Lap*, unleſs at the ſame time we ſay, the *whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord*, Pſal. 124. 7.

The Succeſs of our Councils and Arms we now bleſs God for, and former amazing ones, have bin ſo exquiſitely Chain'd together, the proceedings of Providence ſo delicate, ſo exact, that a careleſs Beholder can't find out the curious variety of their Connection. The Obſervation

ſervation muſt be very nice indeed, to ſee the Thread that guides from Earth to Heaven. This Wiſdom of *Providence* ſhou'd open to us a new Scene of Joy, and Gladneſs ſhou'd ſit on every Face.

What I've hitherto ſaid is not intended to invalidate the uſe of means, or deſtroy Second Cauſes: No, they do well in their place, and in Subordination to God; He is the ſource, the prime, the original Cauſe of all things. The Tool in the Mechanicks Hand is ready for his Service, but remains uſeleſs there till he directs it. Strength generally overcomes in War, Wealth is got by Induſtry, Learning by Study, Honour's the reward of *Vertuous Actions*; and in *Scripture* we have an inſtance of a King who was blam'd for his inconſideration, and condemn'd for his raſhneſs in Proclaiming War without well weighing whether he was able with Ten Thouſand, to meet him that cometh againſt him with Twenty; and when he found himſelf put to it, for not ſending an Embaſſage for Conditions of Peace rather than riſque his Kingdom, and thereby his Subjects ſafety, *Luke* 14. 31, 32. Numbers, 'tis true, ſometimes fall before the Few; but then the Succeſs is owing to an inviſible Hand, and abundantly more ſets forth God's Power, than the General's Conduct. *Five ſhall Chaſe an Hundred, and an Hundred ſhall put Ten Thouſand to flight: and your Enemies ſhall fall before you by the Sword*, Lev. 26, 8. *If God be for us who can be againſt us*, Rom.

Rom. 8. 31. Almighty God hath overthrown Armies by Miracles, as when Haughty *Pharaoh* was drown'd in the *Red Sea*, when the Angel deſtroy'd the *Aſſyrian* King, and when *Siſera* by the Stars of Heaven was defeated. The *Ethiopian* Army was entirely routed by King *Aſa*'s handful of Men, and a few *Greecians* gain'd a compleat Victory over the Powerful and Numerous Troops of the Mighty *Xerxes*. From theſe Inſtances, 'tis the reaſoning of Nature, abſtracted from Revelation, that a Superior Power Governs the World, that God is the Author of Victory, and that his *own right Hand, and his holy Arm, hath gotten us the Victory.*

I have done what I propos'd at the entrance upon this Diſcourſe, and have nothing left to do but to direct the moſt Religious ways of being Joyful for, and expreſſing our moſt grateful ſenſe of the Glorious Succeſs God hath vouchſafed to give us.

Firſt, Let us pay all poſſible Honour to the Inſtrument under God, of the very ſignal Victory we now are met to be Thankful for; To the Queen whoſe ſhining, but unaffected Piety, hath engag'd Heaven to Fight her Battels, and Crown her Reign with Proſperity as impoſſible to be match'd by all former ones, as to be out-done or equal'd by future.

But I correct my ſelf, Her Greatneſs of Soul diſdains the Applauſe of this World; Her Modeſty will take the leaſt Encomium

as

as Flattery, tho' Her Merit keeps the greateſt from being ſo: She is not fond of her own Glory, which adds, if that can be, to the Brightneſs of her Character, and the Luſtre of her other Perfections. She waſts not inglorioufly her Minutes in Softneſſes, and the Luxuries of a Court, but ſpends 'em in thoughtfulneſs for her Kingdoms Welfare: The Subject's eaſe is her Delight, his happineſs her Pleaſure. She hath convinc'd us all of this, by the Zeal ſhe hath expreſt in the Proſecution of this War, and by pitching upon ſuch Great Men as ſerve her Majeſty at Home and Abroad.

The Action for which we at this time render Glory to God, is ſo peculiarly owing to the Duke of *Marlborough*, that I am oblig'd particularly to mention his Grace, and admire Her Majeſty's Wiſdom in making choice of ſo finiſh'd a Hero; One who's fitted for the Camp by his Courage, Diſciplin'd for Commanding by Experience, worthy of his Great Miſtreſs's Honour by his Faithfulneſs, and *Britains* unalterable Veneration by nobleſt Actions, and moſt ſignal Services.

And here I muſt not forget the *Elector of Hannover* and *Prince Eugene*, who deſerve ſome ſhare in the Glory of the Victorious Day, and I think I can't do greater Juſtice to their Characters, or more Honour to their Perſons, than by ſaying, that in Bravery and Conduct, in Valour and Sagacity, both are *Marlboroughs*.

And

And now what great reaſon have we to Sing of the *Mercies of God*, for placing over us ſo *good a Queen*, and for keeping us in Peace, even when engag'd in War. We only hear Accounts of thoſe Bloody Tragedies acted in Foreign Contries to ſecure the Right of our own. Thanks be to God that *Britain* is not the Seat of this terrible, tho' neceſſary War: Bleſſed be God that we are in this place returning Thanks for't, for our Enemies wou'd prevent us if they cou'd; Bleſſed be God we have the Proteſtant Religion ſecur'd to us, which the matchleſs Monarch in Barbarity and Bloodſhed wou'd overthrow; and Thanks be to God that our Intrepid General hath reduc'd his Power, otherwiſe we muſt have bow'd our Necks to the *French*, Popiſh, Tyrannical Yoke. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy Name be the Praiſe, for theſe unſpeakable Mercies*, Pſal. 115. 1.

Let us expreſs our eſteem for Her Majeſty's Sacred Perſon, our liking of, and Love for Her Government, by Obedience and Gratitude. Let us willingly give *Cæſar* his due, and let us, by being Warmly and Cordially concern'd for the preſent moſt Happy Eſtabliſhment, demonſtrate, that Loyalty is one of the Favourite Principles of our Religion.

As to the *Pretender's* Attempt to invade *Britain*, 'twas, we bleſs God, as Fruitleſs as Inſolent, as Senſeleſs as Unjuſt; and was it not equally our Duty to ſhew Gratitude to Heaven

Heaven for Small as well as Mighty Deliverances, 'twou'd be doing that enterprize too much Honour to take the leaſt notice of it. Thanks to the Almighty, that there was found ſo remarkable an unanimity among Her Majeſty's Subjects in *North-Britain*; Thanks to God that *England* was ſenſible of its Happineſs, and cloſely Adhered to the beſt of Women, the beloved Queen *ANNE*: And Oh! I wiſh to God, both were ſtrangers to Diviſions in Church and State. 'Tis a ſad thing that the Profeſſors of the ſame Faith, ſhould deſtroy one another by an unreaſonable ſeparation, and that thoſe who are Heirs of the ſame Salvation, ſhou'd not be kind and tender Hearted one towards another, forbearing one another in Love for Jeſus's ſake: This miſtake diſtempers Government, exaſperates the People, and offends our God.

Nevertheleſs I can't but think, and honeſtly declare, that the Diſſenters are the cauſe of our differences in Religion, and *do things contrary to the Doctrine they have learnt*, Rom. 16. 17.

Our Church hath been hitherto defended againſt all its Adverſaries by Learned Arguments, and now let us Eſtabliſh it by our Charity. A Church it is agreeable in Doctine and Diſcipline to the Primitive, the Apoſtolical, the Holy Catholick Church. "Let us "be but as Pious towards God, as Loyal to "our Queen, as Sober in our Selves, as Faith-"ful to our Friends, as Loving to our Ene-

"mies,

" mies, as Charitable to the Poor, as Juſt to " All, as our Church enjoins us, and my " Life, my Eternal Life for yours, we can- " not but be happy for evermore. They who differ from, or Condemn us for making uſe of Forms and Ceremonies, " do with the ſame " Breath Condemn the Patriarchs, the Pro- " phets, the Apoſtles, the Martyrs, the whole " Catholick-Church, Militant and Tryum- " phant; yea, and Chriſt himſelf the Head " of it, who uſed them as well as we.

Secondly, To Repent of all our Sins, to amend our Lives, and to be Sober and Temperate, is another way of expreſſing our Gratitude, of returning Thanks to God, and of fixing him in our intereſt.

Let us prevail with our ſelves to do it, and probably whilſt we are praiſing his Greatneſs for theſe ſucceſſes, we may lay the Foundation of others.

The Advice *Holofernes* receiv'd from *Achior the Ammonite* is worthy of our notice, *My Lord and Governour, if there be any Error in this People, and they Sin againſt their God, let us conſider that this ſhall be their Ruine, and let us go up and we ſhall overcome them: And if there be no Iniquity in their Nation, let my Lord paſs by, leſt their Lord defend them, and their God be for them, and we become a reproach before all the World*, Judith 5. 20. 21.

Riot and Exceſs don't become a Day of Thankſgiving. True Joy and Gladneſs conſiſts in Meditation, in thinking upon the Di-

vine

vine Goodneſs, and our own Happineſs. We are, I confeſs, permitted more freely to enjoy our ſelves upon ſuch occaſions; but yet that allowance is given us not to loſe our Senſes, but to Innocently pleaſe 'em, and ſo to raiſe our Spirits and Cheer our Minds, that we may be the better able to Sing new Songs unto our God, and praiſe afreſh his Holy Name.

This is true Religion, this is the meaning of ſerving him in *Holineſs and Righteouſneſs all the Days of this Life*, and the infallible way to be happy in the next, thro' the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, to whom with *God the Father*, and *God the Holy Ghoſt*, be aſcribed all *Power*, *Honour*, and *Glory*, now, and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

Lately Publiſh'd.

THE Book of Common Prayer and Adminiſtration of the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, according to the Uſe of the Church of *England*, with the Pſalms of *David* Paraphraſed; with an account of the Feſtivals and Faſts, *&c.* the whole done in a different method from any hitherto Extant, by *W. Nicholls*, D. D. Printed for *W. Taylor*, at the *Ship* in St. *Paul's Church-yard.*